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restrictions upon the power of the legislature to make debts (1848), but that honor belongs to Rhode Island, which introduced such a restriction in the constitution adopted in 1842, at the close of the Dorr War. On pages 15 and 20 occurs the statement that the last payment on the old national debt was made in 1834; this should read 1836. In the discussion of the causes of the growth of state debts between 1830 and 1840, no consideration is given to the fact that railroads were a new invention and that they were absolutely necessary at any cost in the Western states. In table vii, page 37, it is stated that the sessions of the Legislature of California are limited to 100 days. There is no fixed limit, but the legislators can collect a *per diem* for sixty days only. But the first legislature after the adoption of the constitution was allowed payment for 100 days. On page 112 California is omitted from the list of states which exempt growing crops. In the discussion of the forms of the tax rate, page 114, no mention is made of the peculiar forms of the tax base, such as the Grand List of Vermont, from which a new form of the tax rate arises.

Some rather naïve judgments are expressed. Thus, on page 61 it is said that the members of the state legislatures are convinced of the correctness of the "theory of the diffusion of taxes," and that hence they consider no tax as good as an old one. We were not aware that the members of the state legislatures thought seriously of any tax theory. On page 147 the differences in the financial systems of the states are spoken of as insignificant, and the author reaches the conclusion that they will gradually disappear. The present tendencies are, however, all in the opposite direction, and the differences are anything but insignificant.

The treatment of the tax systems of the different states is extremely confused and well illustrates the necessity of studying the system of each state by itself. The similarities which tempt to a general discussion are very superficial.

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Introduction to the Study of Economics. BY CHARLES JESSE BULLOCK, Ph. D. Pp. 511. Price \$1.25. New York, Boston and Chicago: Silver, Burdett & Co., 1897.

As another attempt to formulate in an elementary text-book the results of recent investigation and analysis in the field of economics, Dr. Bullock's "Introduction" will be welcomed by a wide circle of readers. Its perusal, it is safe to say, will arouse feelings both of satisfaction and of disappointment in the minds of those who seek

in its pages an explanation of the complex industrial phenomena which surround them. The book is not easy to read, nor are its theoretical parts easy to understand. On the other hand, it abounds in useful statistical information and illustrations drawn from actual business life, which are sure to make it interesting to students. The author shows a wide acquaintance with the literature of economics, and his references are nearly always well selected, though somewhat too copious for practical use.

The work is divided into sixteen chapters, of which the longest (56 pp.) is devoted to the "Distribution of Wealth," while the shortest and concluding chapter (14 pp.) discusses the "Economic Functions of Government." Each chapter is followed by a short table of references for collateral reading, while the whole work is concluded by a sixteen-page bibliography, referring to French and German as well as to English and American literature.

How best to introduce economics to the unsophisticated student is a question that perennially harasses the minds alike of teachers and text-book writers. With accepted methods the author of the book under review evidently has little patience. Instead of commencing with the usual observations in regard to the relations between economics and business, he introduces his treatise with a summary account of the economic history of the United States. Well-balanced as this account undoubtedly is, I cannot but think it out of place as a preparation for the chapters on economic theory which follow. The institutions of private property, freedom of contract, money, credit, and even capitalistic production, a study of whose origins *would be* most helpful to the beginner in political economy, were borrowed by us from the mother country. Aside from slavery, therefore, our own economic history has been exceedingly simple. An understanding of how population has increased and spread out over our West, of how we have utilized our natural resources, and of how manufactures and means of communication have grown up among us, however important to the American citizen, is of little direct assistance to the student of economics.

However, I agree with Dr. Bullock in believing that the ordinary text-books plunge too precipitately into an *analysis* of economic phenomena. It seems to be forgotten by the writers of these works that, whereas the older economists addressed themselves to the business community and could take for granted a thorough acquaintance with business phenomena, their pages will be read mainly by students as unfamiliar with the subject-matter of economics as with the science itself. It is easier to appreciate this difficulty than to discover the best means of coping with it. With some diffidence I would suggest as

a better introduction to the study of economics than industrial history, a concrete *description* of the actual structure and methods of modern business, which should pave the way for, and in a sense, justify the abstractions subsequently employed.

Coming to the portion of Dr. Bullock's book treating of economics proper, a chapter on consumption is found to prepare the way for work on the production of wealth, an arrangement which attests the author's conversion to the modern view of what clearness and logic require. Exchange is taken up after production, and introduces three excellent chapters treating of money. Chapters on monopolies and on international trade are then interjected before the long chapter on distribution, already alluded to, while the work concludes with three chapters discussing in a sympathetic, and, at the same time, critical spirit, such matters as labor unions, land nationalization and socialism.

The principal fault to be found with the body of the author's work, refers to his literary style rather than to the matter presented. Short, feverish sentences hurry the reader along from one topic to another, until his head fairly whirls. Scarcely any subject is treated calmly and exhaustively, but each is dismissed with an outline-like paragraph or page, reading often more like a note-book than like a serious work. For example, on pages 186 and 187 we have the following: "§ 110. We must consider next the causes that determine the value of commodities. In this question economists are not yet agreed concerning certain points. First, it is necessary to distinguish between market value and normal value. During 1895 the price of a bushel of wheat in New York varied from fifty-six to eighty-three cents, and was seldom exactly the same on any two successive days," etc. Aside from obvious infelicities of expression, the rushing quality of this diction should be apparent.

Since the author is persuaded—and rightly so, I believe—of the unwisdom of introducing "the beginner to many controversies on fundamental points of theory," it would be unfair to criticise too minutely the chapters treating of value ("exchange"), and distribution. After reading them over carefully I am at a loss to understand how he escapes from the logical circle involved in explaining normal value by a reference to the money cost of production (p. 195), and subsequently finding the "upper limit" to wages (p. 406), in the fact that enough must be left after wages are paid to remunerate the *entrepreneurs* and capitalists for their contributions to the productive result. This may be due, however, to the author's effort to simplify the theory of distribution rather than to any vagueness in his own thinking. In any case, I believe a straight forward explanation of the

"productivity" theory of distribution would give to beginners a clearer and more accurate idea of the influences determining wages, interest, profits, and rent, than the somewhat confusing combination of theories that Dr. Bullock presents.

H. R. S.

A General Freight and Passenger Post. A Practical Solution of the Railroad Problem. By JAMES LEWIS COWLES. Pages xii, 155. Price, \$1.00. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1896.

This little book is characterized by the general advantages and disadvantages of the other volumes in the Questions of the Day Series. It presents a brief and somewhat dogmatic view of the question discussed. The book contains four chapters. The first, devoted to the post-office since 1839, contains a brief general description of the development of the post-office in England and the United States. The second chapter discusses the abuses of the present system of railway management, setting forth in a clear way the absurdities and inconsistencies underlying the system of passenger and freight tariffs in existence in the United States to-day. The author has a tolerably easy task to prove that very few systems could be worse or more illogical. He emphasizes properly enough the proposition that the railways are, from an economic and social point of view, really public instead of private institutions, while they are managed as if they were purely private in character. The third chapter takes up the real discussion of the subject, and attacks the principle of distance as a basis for the determination of railway rates. Much interesting evidence is adduced to show how steadily and rapidly the cost of transportation decreases as the traffic grows. The fourth and last chapter considers the principle of cost of service as a basis of public transportation charges, and an interesting argument is made in favor of adopting this principle instead of the distance principle.

There is no doubt that American railway managers have failed to discern the possibilities of the passenger traffic as a source of income. Their minds have been so exclusively fixed upon the freight business, and we may say, upon the long-distance through-freight business, that they have been blind to the possibilities of profit in the development of the passenger traffic and of local freight business.

Of course from an economic point of view the whole possibility of going over to the system of uniform rates for passengers and freight, independent of distance, turns at bottom upon the possible increase of the business itself, and it must be confessed that at this time any set of railroad managers who should adopt this reform would be